

Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in K-12 Education

Minutes

March 19, 2003

Members Present: James Doughty (Chair), David Silvernail (Vice Chair), Robert Cobb, Bonnie Titcomb Lewis, Joyce McPhetres, James Rier.

Others Present: Martha Freeman, Laurie LaChance, Lee Umphrey, Joanne Allen, Paula Gravelle, James Sloan

After introductions and some logistical considerations, the Task Force (TF) turned its attention to a review of the executive order establishing the TF. This review led to several points of consensus:

- a. The goal of the TF work is to identify ways of maximizing cost savings so more K-12 revenues may be directed toward instruction.
 - b. The TF will examine all components of the K-12 education system they deem appropriate for identifying potential efficiencies. Using a preliminary review of existing documents and studies, and descriptive data, the TF will identify several focus areas/topics for its initial work.
 - c. The TF will focus its work on identifying cost-savings, efficiencies, and, where appropriate, incentives for promoting cost-savings and efficiencies. The TF will not address issues related to the amount nor distribution of state subsidies and taxpayer equity.
 - d. The Task Force emphasized that increasing efficiencies and cost savings will require both the state and local communities to explore, and adopt, where appropriate, alternative methods of delivering services. Wherever appropriate and possible, the Task Force will identify and disseminate information on Best Practices on efficiencies and cost-savings.
- The TF received a briefing on the Legislatively established School Administrative Unit Study Group. Although it was recognized that the Study Group and TF share common concerns, and some common tasks, the

Co-Chair of the Study Group, Joyce McPhetres, and the Task Force members concluded that the Study Group would focus its work, as it presently does, primarily on identifying efficient and effective ways of organizing school administrative units. The Group and TF will share information, sources, and findings as appropriate.

- The TF also reviewed the proposed K-12 Education Cost-Saving Incentive Program, and discussed the relationship between the Program and the work of the Task Force. As stated in the proposed language establishing the Incentive Program, the TF may be called upon for advice. Accordingly, upon request from Commissioner Rebecca Wyke of the Department of Administrative and Financial Service, the Task Force will serve an advisory role on the establishment of program criteria.
- The TF identified several pieces of information they would like to use in the April 8th meeting for purposes of identifying focus areas/ topics for its initial work. This information includes:
 - a. per pupil expenditures and statewide expenditures by categories (e.g., instruction, administration, etc.),
 - b. enrollment data and enrollment projections,
 - c. copies of existing reports on regionalization/consolidation,
 - d. descriptions of current regional alliances and collaborations,
 - e. information on distribution of federal funds, and
 - f. information on Essential Programs and Services and funding formula.
- After identifying focus areas at the next meeting, the TF will schedule a series of meetings with various stakeholder groups, to seek their input on identifying cost-savings and greater efficiencies in our K-12 system. In addition, the TF will seek suggestions by encouraging all interested parties to submit their ideas via the website www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/ .

- The interim report, due May 1, will also be discussed at the April 8th meeting.
- The TF was informed it may receive some staff and administrative support from the Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, and Evaluation, Maine State Planning Office, and the Maine Department of Education.
- The TF agreed to meet at least twice before May 1, and to tentatively schedule future meetings at three week intervals. The schedule will be reviewed periodically to determine if any adjustments are needed. The April meetings will be:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
April 8, 2003	10:00am – 4:00pm	Maine School Management Association Board Room (49 Memorial Drive, Augusta)
April 16, 2003	10:00am – 4:00pm	Maine School Management Association Board Room (49 Memorial Drive, Augusta)